

Public Participation at Board Meetings

The State Board of Education recognizes its obligation to help citizens of the state understand the operation of the Department of Education. The Board is also aware of the need for communication with citizens to permit the public to make its wishes known and to permit the Board to explain general policies governing the operation of the schools in the state. Therefore, in an effort to provide a procedure by which matters of statewide interest concerning the schools may be brought before the Board and to permit the Board to conduct its meetings in an orderly and efficient manner, the State Board of Education establishes the following procedures with regard to citizen participation in the meetings of the Board.

The published agenda of every regular meeting of the State Board shall contain an item identified as Public Comment Period. This period may be available to any person who wishes to address the State Board on any subject within its authority.

Each individual speaking to the Board will be required to complete a "Sign-in" card to identify him or herself. Persons speaking to the Board during Public Comment may hand out printed materials to the Board but may not use any other form of media. Each person may address the Board for up to five minutes.

Any citizen or spokesperson for a group of citizens may request a 10 minute special appearance before the State Board of Education to take place on the first or second day of any regular meeting of the Board except when the Board declares itself to be in executive session. Requests for special appearances must be made in writing to the Commissioner of Education or a Board members and received no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time at least three business days prior to the first day of the meeting in order to permit such appearance to be placed on the published agenda. Pursuant to Board Policy B11, the first day of the Board's regular meetings occurs on the first Thursday of each month except for the months of July and January. In January the first day of the Board's regular meeting occurs on the first Thursday after the first Monday of the month. The Board does not hold a regular meeting in July. Requests for special appearances may be granted or denied at the sole discretion of the Commissioner. Individuals whose requests for special appearances are denied may instead speak during Public Comment Period as provided in this Policy.

If at any time persons appearing before the Board exceed the time limitations set forth in this Policy or on the agenda or become abusive in language or behavior, it shall be the responsibility of the President to declare that person out of order and to refuse permission to continue to address the Board. Anyone refusing to be identified will be prohibited from speaking.

A Board member may request of the Chair a point of clarification in regard to a speaker's comments.

The Board President may designate agenda items where public comment may be taken on that agenda item. Fifteen minutes may be allowed for such comment on each designated item.

The Board President may also choose to allow public comment at any time during a meeting. A majority of members present and voting may also choose to allow, terminate or reduce the time for public comment at any time.

Board Action History

- 11/15/81 – Prior BCBI
(No copies of prior version.)
- 12/7/84 – Prior 9322 BOP
(Same text as BCBI, except for deletion of statute references.)
- 12/8/95 – Prior B12
(Similar text in first 3 paragraphs, but appearance extensions may also be granted by majority, public comment period reduced from 30 to 15 minutes for items not on agenda [and from 6 to 3 persons], added agenda item public comment designations, and option for allowing additional public comment during meetings.)
- 9/7/06 – B12
(Added majority vote option for extending public comment period.)
- 3/5/2013 – B12
(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)
- 1/7/2014 – B12
(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)

Cross-References

- 84-1412 – Public participation.
- 79-317(2) – Public participation.
- State Board Policy B11, “ Board Meeting Notification for Regular Meetings”

